

**CLAIMS:**

We claim:

1. A toasted corn flavor additive comprising a regrind of toasted corn chips, wherein said regrind of toasted corn chips has an ash content that is higher than that normally found in consumable corn chips, and further wherein said regrind has a moisture content ranging from about 0.1% to about 15% by weight.
2. The toasted corn flavor additive of Claim 1 wherein said regrind is in the form of a powder comprising a plurality of particles, and further wherein at least about 75% of the particles have U.S. mesh sizes between about 26 and about 50.
3. The toasted corn flavor additive of Claim 2 wherein said particles comprise coarse particulates and fine particulates, and further wherein said coarse particulates have an average U.S. mesh size of about 20 and said fine particulates have an average U.S. mesh size of about 40.
4. The toasted corn flavor additive of Claim 1 wherein said regrind has an oil content of about 2.0% to about 5.0% by weight.
5. The toasted corn flavor additive of Claim 1 wherein said additive has a moisture content ranging from about 0.5% to about 6% by weight.

6. The toasted corn flavor additive of Claim 1 wherein said additive has a colorimeter L-value less than that of a dry masa.

7. A masa mixture comprising a dry masa flour and a regrind of toasted corn chips.
8. The masa mixture of claim 7 wherein said regrind of toasted corn chips constitutes between about 0.1% to about 10% by weight of the masa mixture.
9. The masa mixture of claim 7 wherein said regrind of toasted corn chips constitutes between about 1.7% to about 4.0% by weight of the masa mixture.
10. The masa mixture of claim 7 wherein said regrind is in the form of a powder comprising a plurality of particles, and further wherein at least about 75% of the particles have U.S. mesh sizes between about 26 and about 50.
11. The masa mixture of claim 7 wherein said regrind has a moisture content ranging from about 0.1% to about 15% by weight.
12. The masa mixture of claim 7 wherein said regrind has a colorimeter L-value less than that of a dry masa.

13. An enhanced, untoasted, fried corn chip comprising a mixture of corn masa and a regrind of toasted corn chips.
14. The enhanced, untoasted, fried corn chip of claim 13 wherein said enhanced, untoasted, fried corn chip has a toasted flavor optimization method test result that is substantially similar to that of a toasted, fried corn chip.
15. The enhanced, untoasted, fried corn chip of claim 13 wherein said enhanced, untoasted, fried corn chip has a concentration of dimethyl-ethyl-pyrazine that is twice that present in an unenhanced, untoasted, fried corn chip.

16. The enhanced, untoasted, fried corn chip of claim 13 wherein:

about 36% by weight of said enhanced, untoasted, fried corn chip  
comprises a dry corn masa;

5 about 27% by weight of said enhanced, untoasted, fried corn chip  
comprises at least one starch compound;

about 3.7% by weight of said enhanced, untoasted, fried corn chip  
comprises said regrind;

about 0.05% by weight of said enhanced, untoasted, fried corn chip  
comprises an emulsifier;

10 about 28% by weight of said enhanced, untoasted, fried corn chip  
comprises an oil; and

said enhanced, untoasted, fried corn chip has a moisture content of about  
1.2% by weight.

17. A method for making a toasted corn flavor for dry masa flour, said method comprising the steps of:

a) forming a fresh masa dough;

b) sheeting said fresh masa dough;

5 c) cutting said dough into a plurality of flavor preforms;

d) toasting said flavor preforms to form a plurality of toasted flavor pieces having a moisture content ranging from about 0.5% by weight to about 15% by weight; and

10 e) grinding said toasted flavor pieces into a powder to form a toasted corn flavor additive.

18. The method for making a toasted corn flavor additive of Claim 17 wherein said forming a fresh masa dough in step a) further comprises:

i) cooking a plurality of whole corn kernels in a solution of water and lime;

ii) steeping said kernels in said solution;

5 iii) draining said solution from said kernels;

iv) washing said kernels; and

v) grinding said kernels to form a fresh masa dough;

19. The method for making a toasted corn flavor additive of Claim 17 wherein said forming a fresh masa dough in step a) further comprises extruding a plurality of whole corn kernels with a solution of water and lime to form a fresh masa dough.

20. The method for making a toasted corn flavor additive of Claim 17 wherein said sheeting of step b) and said cutting of step c) are performed simultaneously.
21. The method for making a toasted corn flavor additive of Claim 17 wherein said toasting of step d) further comprises applying convective and radiant heat to said flavor preforms.
22. The method for making a toasted corn flavor additive of Claim 21 wherein said radiant heat comprises infrared radiation.
23. The method for making a toasted corn flavor additive of Claim 17 wherein step d) further comprises frying said toasted flavor pieces after said toasting of said flavor preforms.
24. The method for making a toasted corn flavor additive of Claim 17 wherein said toasted flavor pieces have a moisture content of about 1.0% by weight.
25. The method for making a toasted corn flavor additive of Claim 17 wherein said toasting of step d) is performed until said toasted flavor pieces have a colorimeter L-value less than that of a dry masa.
26. A toasted corn flavor additive made from the method of Claim 17.

27. A method for making enhanced corn based chips from dry masa flour comprising the steps of:
- a) providing a dry masa flour;
  - b) mixing said flour with water to form a masa dough;
  - 5 c) mixing a toasted corn flavor additive comprising a regrind of toasted corn chips into said masa dough until said additive is evenly dispersed to form an enhanced dough;
  - d) forming said enhanced dough into a plurality of preforms;
  - e) cooking said preforms to form a plurality of enhanced corn based chips.
28. The method for making enhanced corn based chips of Claim 27 wherein said mixing of step b) comprises extruding.
29. The method for making enhanced corn based chips of Claim 27 wherein said mixing of step c) further comprises mixing until said additive comprises from about 0.1% to about 10% by dry weight of the enhanced dough.
30. The method for making enhanced corn based chips of Claim 27 wherein said mixing of step c) further comprises mixing until said additive comprises from about 1.7% to about 4.0% by dry weight of the enhanced dough.



31. The method for making enhanced corn based chips of Claim 27 wherein said toasted corn flavor additive of step c) comprises a regrind of toasted corn chips, and further wherein said regrind of toasted corn chips:

has an ash content that is higher than that normally found in consumable  
5 corn chips; and

has a moisture content ranging from about 0.1% to about 15% by weight.

32. The method for making enhanced corn based chips of Claim 27 wherein said toasted corn flavor additive of step c) is in the form of a powder comprising a plurality of particles, and further wherein at least about 75% of the particles have U.S. mesh sizes between about 26 and about 50.

33. The method for making enhanced corn based chips of Claim 27 wherein said toasted corn flavor additive of step c) has a moisture content ranging from about 0.5% to about 6% by weight.

34. The method for making enhanced corn based chips of Claim 27 wherein said toasted corn flavor additive of step c) has a colorimeter L-value less than that of said dry masa flour.

35. The method for making enhanced corn based chips of Claim 27 wherein said enhanced corn based chips of step e) have a toasted flavor optimization method test result that is substantially similar to that of a toasted, fried corn chip.

36. The method for making enhanced corn based chips of Claim 27 wherein said enhanced corn based chips of step e) have a concentration of dimethyl-ethyl-pyrazine that is twice that present in an unenhanced, untoasted, fried corn chip.
37. The method for making enhanced corn based chips of Claim 27 wherein said cooking of step f) comprises frying the preforms in hot oil.
38. The method for making enhanced corn based chips of Claim 27 wherein said cooking of step f) comprises baking the preforms.
39. The method for making enhanced corn based chips of Claim 27 wherein said cooking of step f) comprises baking and frying the preforms.
40. A plurality of enhanced corn based chips made from the method of Claim 27.
41. The enhanced corn based chips of Claim 40 wherein said enhanced corn based chips comprise a plurality of corn tortilla chips.
42. The enhanced corn based chips of Claim 40 wherein said enhanced corn based chips comprise a plurality of puffed snack pieces.

43. A toasted flavor additive comprising a plurality of ground particles of a toasted product, wherein said toasted product comprises at least one of the following:  
oats, barley, waxy barley, rice, waxy rice, glutinous rice, sweet rice, wheat, corn  
wheat, beans, corn, waxy corn, cassava, corn flour, masa corn flour, corn grits,  
5 corn meal, tapioca, potato, potato flour, potato granules, potato flannels, potato  
flakes, sago, waxy sago, pea, sorghum, amaranth, legumes, modified starches,  
native starches, dehydrated starches, amioca, and starches derived from tubers.